

Message Text

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TAGS: SHUM, PA, AR, CO, BR, VE, BL, PE, EC, CI

SUBJECT: GUIDANCE ON SOUTHERN CONE BLOC INITIATIVES

REFERENCE: ASUNCION 2279

1. REFTTEL REPORTS THAT THE PROSPECTIVE JUNE 3 MEETING OF SOUTHERN CONE CHIEFS OF STATE HAS BEEN POSTPONED AND DOWNGRADED TO A PRE-OASGA MEETING IN GRENADA AMONG FOREIGN MINISTERS. THIS CABLE PROVIDES GENERAL GUIDANCE ON OUR RESPONSE TO THIS AND SIMILAR EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE AGAINST OUR POLICIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

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2. WHILE THE DISRUPTIVE POTENTIAL OF A GEO-POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL BLOC CENTERED ON THE SOUTHERN CONE IS CLEAR, THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THE PROMOTERS OF A CHIEFS OF STATE MEETING SUGGEST THAT PRACTICAL FEASIBILITY OF SUCH A BLOC IS STILL LIMITED. UNLESS SOME CATALYTIC EVENT INTERVENES, THEREFORE, WE SUSPECT THAT IF SOME

SOUTHERN CONE FOREIGN MINISTERS DO EVENTUALLY MEET IN GRENADA, THEY ARE LIKELY TO DO LITTLE MORE THAN ATTEMPT TO COORDINATE PRIVATELY THEIR VIEWS AND POSITIONS PRIOR TO THE OASGA.

3. AS THERE IS AMPLE PRECEDENT FOR LATIN AMERICAN CAUCUSES

PRIOR TO INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS, A SOUTHERN CONE MINI-CAUCUS IN GRENADA DOES NOT IN ITSELF WARRANT ALARM. NOR FOR THAT MATTER, IS IT SOMETHING WE COULD AT THIS POINT DO MUCH TO PREVENT.

4. THE LONGER-RUN IMPLICATIONS OF A REGIONAL OR SUB-REGIONAL COALITION AGAINST OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES ARE CONSIDERABLY MORE SERIOUS, HOWEVER. CLEARLY, IT WOULD SERVE ONLY PINOCHET'S INTERESTS TO INVEIGLE OTHER COUNTRIES INTO IDENTIFICATION WITH CHILE. CONVERSELY OUR INTERESTS WOULD SUFFER. ARGENTINE AND BRAZILIAN MEMBERSHIP IN SUCH A BLOC WOULD TEND TO PROVIDE MORAL AND DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT FOR CONTINUED HUMAN-RIGHTS ABUSES AND RENDER BOTH COUNTRIES LESS AMENABLE TO OUR APPROACHES ON THIS SUBJECT. MOREOVER WE HAVE RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF PARAGUAY THAT IT WOULD INVITE THE IAHRG TO VISIT PARAGUAY THIS YEAR. WERE THIS DECISION TO BE CHANGED NOW UNDER PRESSURES FROM AN INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF MILITARY HARDLINERS, THE RESULT WOULD BE VERY DAMAGING TO THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM AS WELL AS TO PROSPECTS FOR MULTILATERALIZING THE PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONALLY CONFIDENTIAL

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RECOGNIZED HUMAN RIGHTS. LASTLY, WE CANNOT DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH A BLOC MIGHT ATTRACT SUPPORT FROM, OR EXERT PRESSURE ON, SOME COUNTRIES THAT ARE MARGINALLY INCLINED TO SUPPORT OUR POLICIES AT PRESENT. IT WOULD ALSO INHIBIT ANY CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA MIGHT PLAY.

5. OUR RESPONSES TO FEELERS ON THESE MATTERS MUST KEEP SEVERAL CONSIDERATIONS IN MIND. WE DO NOT WANT TO OVERREACT IN WAYS THAT WOULD FUEL FEARS OF US INTERVENTION, PROVIDE AMMUNITION TO HARDLINERS, EMBARRASS OUR FRIENDS, OR OTHERWISE PROVOKE A NEW WAVE OF LATIN AMERICAN "SOLIDARITY" AGAINST US. OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE, WE DO NOT WANT TO TAKE SUCH A SOFT LINE THAT WE APPEAR DEFENSIVE, CONFUSED, OR PREPARED TO YIELD TO EXTREME NATIONALIST REACTIONS. IN PARTICULAR, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE NOT APPEAR DISPOSED TO RETREAT ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

6. ACTION REQUESTED. WE SHOULD NOT NOW APPEAR OVERLY INTERESTED OR OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A PRE-OASGA MINI-CAUCUS. IF ASKED ABOUT MORE FORMAL INITIATIVES TENDING TOWARD BLOC FORMATION, HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD RESPOND THAT, WHILE WE OBVIOUSLY

CANNOT OBJECT TO MEETINGS AMONG OTHER GOVERNMENTS, WE JUST AS OBVIOUSLY HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT ANY MOVES ANTAGONISTIC TO THE EFFECTIVE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS OR, OF COURSE, TO THE UNITED STATES ITSELF. WE EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO WORK CONSTRUCTIVELY, BOTH BILATERALLY AND IN THE OAS AND ELSEWHERE, TO DEVELOP HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES THAT WILL BE SUPPORTED BY THE NATIONS OF THIS HEMISPHERE. WE SEE NO VALUE IN NOT DISCUSSING THESE ISSUES OPENLY AND IN A NON-CONFRONTATIONAL SPIRIT.

7. HILE THE ABOVE SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED IN RESPONSE
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TO ALL INQUIRIES, SOME ADDITIONAL TAILORING TO SPECIFIC SITUATIONS IS ALSO DESIRABLE. WHEN AN INQUIRY COMES FROM A GOVERNMENT THAT HAS TURNED DOWN SOUTHERN CONE APPROACHES, YOU SHOULD STATE FRANKLY THAT WE ARE PLEASED THAT THEY ARE NOT JOINING WHAT APPEAR TO BE ILL-CONCEIVED EFFORTS TO FORM AN ORGANIZED FRONT AGAINST OUR COMMON EFFORTS. WHEN AN INQUIRY COMES FROM A GOVERNMENT THAT IS UNDECIDED OR FROM AN OFFICIAL WHO IS SUFFICIENTLY OPEN TO UNDERSTAND THE POINT, YOU SHOULD NOTE THAT THE EMERGENCE OF BLOC POLITICS CAN ONLY SERVE TO POLARIZE RELATIONS. THIS WOULD COMPLICATE THE EFFORTS OF THE U.S. AND LIKE-MINDED COUNTRIES TO TAILOR AN EFFECTIVE POLICY TAKING FULL ACCOUNT OF OUR BILATERAL LEVERAGE AND DIFFERING NATIONAL PROBLEMS AND PROGRESS IN HUMAN RIGHTS. VANCE

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